pertaining to the search query is found available in a public portion of a system controlled by one of the users, the response is provided to the requestor who can then get the information directly from that user. Thus as amended, Claim 1 recites:

> receiving a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user via a data network, the query including information relevant to a request for information and the first set of users being on the data network when the query is sent ; and
>
> forwarding a response to the query from a second user over the data network, the second user being a member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the second user.

(*emphasis added*)

**What Kanoh teaches in view of the claimed invention**

Kanoh teaches a system in which a fax machine can be used as a Web client and receive search results from a popular search site. As clearly referred to by the Examiner, *see* lines 22-42, Kanoh shows that a request is sent out by a fax to a server that extracts a search query from the fax. The search query is then sent out to a search engine to receive search results. The search results are then represented to the requestor by a return fax. It can be observed, as clearly detailed in Fig. 1, FIG. 2 and FIG. 2B of Kanoh, that the search query is sent to one resource for the search results, and there is no requirement that the search results must be lively retrieved. In other words, the search results could provide some resources that may not be on line at the time the search results are obtained, which is indeed one of the problems that the claimed invention has tried to resolve.

In contrast to Kanoh, Claim 1 recites that a search query is sent to a group of users AND these users are on the network at the time the query is sent, and the search response to the query is provided directly from one of the users that have information pertaining to the query. Evidently, there are no such features taught or suggested in Kanoh.

**SUMMARY**

Based on the foregoing, it is submitted that claim 1 is patentably distinct from Kanoh. Neither Kanoh nor the references, viewed alone or in combination, has

taught or suggested the combined features recited in Claim 1 as amended. In addition, the additional limitations recited in its independent claims 3-7 are not further discussed as the above-discussed limitations are clearly sufficient to distinguish the claimed invention from the cited references. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejections under 35 USC §102(b) or §103(a) in view of the amended claims.

Regarding Claims 10 and 14 that are rejected with the same reason used to reject Claim 1, the Applicants wish to apply the above reasons to support Claims 10 and 14 and, hence, believe that Claim 10, 12-14, and 16-19 are allowable over the cited references. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejections under 35 USC §102(b) or §103(a) in view of the amended claims.

Claims 23-26 are newly added and believed to be allowable over the cited references.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicants believe that Claims 1, 3-7, 10, 12-14, 16-19 and 23-26 shall be in condition for allowance over the cited references. Therefore, it is believed that the entire application is now in condition for allowance, early and favorable action is being respectfully solicited.

If there are any issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplementary Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at (408)777-8873.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to:
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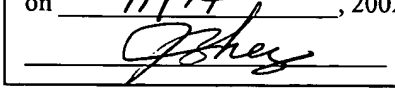
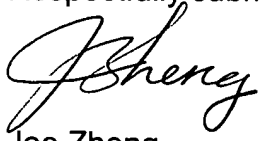


Respectfully submitted,



Joe Zheng
Reg. No.: 39,450

## Version with markings to show changes made

### In the Claims

Please cancel Claims 2, 8-9, 11, 15 and 20-22 without prejudice and amend Claims 1, 3, 5-8, and 11-14, and add Claims 22-26 as follows:

1. (*amended*) A method for accessing information, the method comprising:

[sending] receiving a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user via a data network, the query including information relevant to a request for information and the first set of users being on the data network when the query is sent ; and

[receiving] forwarding a response to the query from a second user over the data network, the second user being a member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the second user.

2. (*cancelled*)

3. (*amended*) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the second set of users accessible by the second user when there is no response received from the first set of users;

receiving a response from a third user, the third user being a member of the second set of users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the third user; and

forwarding the response to the first user.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising:

adding the third user to the first set of users.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein:

the second set of users dynamically formed such that the second set of users has no intersection with the first set of users.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein:

The query includes a list of users known to have had the query sent to each user of the list of users.

7. The method of claim 4 wherein:

the query includes a timestamp indicating when the query was originated and further comprising discarding queries received at a time later than the timestamp plus a predetermined length of time.

8. (*cancelled*)

9. (*cancelled*)

10. (*amended*) A system comprising:

means for [sending] receiving a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user via a data network, the query including information relevant to a request for information and the first set of users being on the data network when the query is sent; and

means for [receiving] providing a response to the query from a second user, the second user being a member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the second user.

11. (*cancelled*)

12. (*amended*) The system of claim 11 further comprising:

means for [Forwarding] forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the second set of users accessible by the second user;

means for [Receiving] receiving a response from a third user, the third user a member of the second set of users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public portion of a system; and

the means for providing including Means for Forwarding the response from the third user to the first user.

13. The system of claim 12 further comprising:

means for adding the third user to the first set of users.

14. (*amended*) A machine-readable medium embodying instructions for execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to perform [a method, the method] acts comprising:

sending a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user via a data network, the query including information relevant to a request for information and the first set of users being on the data network when the query is sent; and

receiving a response to the query from a second user, the second user a member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the second user.

15. (*cancelled*)

16. (*amended*) The machine-readable medium of claim 15 further embodying instructions for execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to perform [a method, the method] acts further comprising:

forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the second set of users accessible by the second user;

receiving a response from a third user, the third user a member of the second set of users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public portion of a system; and

forwarding the response to the first user.

17. (*amended*) The machine-readable medium of claim 16 further embodying instructions for execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to perform [a method, the method] acts further comprising:

adding the third user to the first set of users.

18. (*amended*) The machine-readable medium of claim 17 [further embodying instructions for execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to perform a method], wherein:

the second set of users dynamically formed such that the second set of users has no intersection with the first set of users; and

the query includes a list of users known to have had the query sent to each user of the list of users.

19. (*amended*) The machine-readable medium of claim 17 [further embodying instructions for execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to perform a method], wherein:

the query includes a timestamp indicating when the query was originated and further comprising discarding queries received at a time later than the timestamp plus a predetermined length of time.

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (*cancelled*)

23. (*newly added*) A system comprising:

a first computer associated with a first user and sending out a query request;

a group of second computers respectively associated with a group of second users and all receiving the query request from the first computer, wherein the first computer is coupled to a data network and all of the second computers are coupled to the data network at a time the query request is made by the first user from the first computer, each of the second computers determines if the each of the second possesses information pertaining to the query request; and

wherein, when one of the second computers determines that the one of the second computers possesses the information, a response is provided to the first computer, the response includes link data to the information such that the first computer can obtain the information directly from the one of the second computers.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the first computer and the second computers form a community sharing public information.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein, when each of the second computers determines that the each of the second computers does not possess the information, a new search query is generated from one of the second computers that has access to another community including a group of third computers, and wherein the one of the second computers forwards a response to the first computer when one of the third computers possesses the required information.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the one of the third computers joins the community to share the public information.